

Public Services at Risk by Legislative Budget Cuts

Now is the Time to Speak Out as Final Decisions Are Made in Juneau

May 2, 2002

Now is the Time

Contact Your Legislator

Phone: Call your local legislative information office

Email your legislator:

- Representative_Firstname_Lastname@legis.state.ak.us
- Senator_Firstname_Lastname@legis.state.ak.us

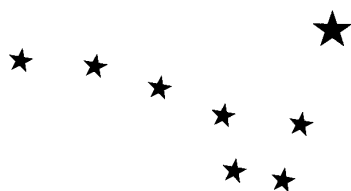
Raise your objections to legislative budget cuts with your legislator and the six budget negotiators:

Senator Dave Donley, R-Anchorage
Senator Pete Kelly, R-Fairbanks
Senator Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel
Rep. Eldon Mulder, R-Anchorage
Rep. Bill Williams, R-Ketchikan
Rep. John Davies, D-Fairbanks

Details on the Cuts

For details on proposed cuts for each region-by-region and department, visit the Office of Management and Budget web site:

<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/omb/akomb.htm>



Contact: Bonnie Gruening
Governor's Office
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
Phone (907) 465-3500
Fax (907) 465-3532
governor@gov.state.ak.us
www.gov.state.ak.us

Vital public services from road maintenance to child protection are on the chopping block under separate versions of next year's state budget passed by the House and Senate. The few days remaining in the legislative session until the May 14th adjournment is the only opportunity to influence final budget decisions. Instead of risking Alaskans' safety and economic good health, Gov. Knowles wants to hold the line on services for the coming year. The Governor's budget calls for modest but strategic investments for the education, health and safety of Alaska's children.

Legislative budget negotiators are making final operating budget decisions in the next few days. Let them know now you support vital public services for Alaska.

Here are some of the proposed cuts that do the most harm to public services:

■ **Public Safety endangered** – The Knowles-Ulmer administration seeks 5 more state troopers specifically to investigate abuse and sexual assault against children. Instead, the legislative leadership is proposing cuts to existing trooper positions (House - 23 troopers; Senate 3 troopers and 11 support staff).

■ **Road maintenance, ferry service hampered** – Cuts will force the closure of road maintenance stations, winter closures of many roads, sale of two state ferries, service reductions by three of the remaining vessels, and higher customer prices for ferry trips. Surviving road maintenance crews, already spread thin, will face even greater work loads with fewer equipment operators.

■ **Development slowed** – Denial of most of the governor's new initiative to improve North Slope air quality, spill response and permit streamlining come at a time when North Slope development is under national scrutiny. Cuts will substantially slow the issuance of leases that would bring Alaska \$10 million in lease payments.

■ **Public health threatened** – The administration proposes modest investments to improve nursing services, the public health lab and community health programs. The legislative leadership calls for no new investments and, depending on which version of their budget is approved, serious cuts to nursing services, the lab and community health grants.

■ **Alcohol scourge continues** – The governor proposes a \$4.7 million alcohol initiative to reduce waitlists for treatment, hire rural counselors and make other critical improvements, along with \$2.5 million in Smart Start to treat women alcohol abusers with children and get more help to juvenile problem drinkers. The House and Senate reject virtually all these new investments, and the Senate devastates alcohol treatment in Alaska with a \$2.4 million cut to existing programs.

■ **Children still at risk** – The House and Senate fund virtually none of the governor's modest new investments to continue the gains of Smart Start. Instead, the House cuts 32 existing child protection workers and short-funds foster care and adoptions by \$4 million. The Senate would short-fund foster care and adoptions by \$2.5 million.

■ **Rural energy threatened** – Because the Senate budget transfers no funds to the Power Cost Equalization program, rural communities' financial viability and ability to generate centralized power are in jeopardy. Economic growth in rural Alaska is directly dependent on reasonably-priced energy.

■ **Resource management worsened** – Cuts will return Alaska to territorial status by handing over management of Alaska's multi-million dollar crab fishery to the feds. House and Senate would eliminate much research, dismantling the genetics lab that conducts statewide genetic stock identification research and evaluation.